



Charming idyllic view in rural areas in Southwest China's Guizhou province.



Fanjing Mountain, a national nature reserve in Tongren, Guizhou province, is a popular travel destination.



An improved transport network, including high-speed railways, has made Guizhou an easier place to visit.

Meeting SW China's rising medical tech requirements

By SONG MENGXING and YANG JUN

Angela Wong from Hong Kong once planned to visit Huangguoshu Waterfall in Guizhou province during the 1970s, but she changed her mind after hearing someone say that the province in Southwest China was unsafe.

But more than three decades later, against all expectations, her career has taken off in the region she previously feared. Now she operates a medical examination center in Guizhou and has come to appreciate the region's environment and development.

Wong said that she traveled to Huangguoshu Waterfall three times last year and has seen the rainbow it creates in the mornings. "It is more beautiful than Niagara Falls, especially the Water Curtain Cave. It's so astonishing!" she said.

Wong said the environment is well protected in Guizhou. She suggested that tourists make the trip to the waterfall in spring and autumn, as that is a particularly special time to visit.

A returnee entrepreneur

She returned to China in 2005, after working with GlaxoSmithKline in the United States for nearly 20 years. At the invitation of one of her close friends, Wong went to Guizhou in 2015, focusing on medical examination and setting up the medical examination center.

"We mainly have a complementary relationship with hospitals, providing them with examination and quarantine services," Wong said.

Her center offers these services based on samples collected by hospitals. Doctors use test data supplied by the center to make a diagnosis and prescribe treatments for patients. Wong said her center is the first laboratory in the provincial capital Guiyang that can screen newborns' placental blood for metabolic and genetic disorders.

"With just a drop of placental blood from newborns, we can diagnose more than 30 congenital metabolic diseases, infectious diseases and other potential problems caused by gene defects," Wong said.

She said the screening can help to reduce parents' anxiety and provide China's less developed western regions with access to cutting-edge medical services.

"I chose Guizhou mainly because I noticed the gap of precision medicine in Southwest China," Wong said, adding that currently there are no companies in the region that deal with high-end examination and quarantine, and offer precision medicine services.

She said her center filled this gap and would have great market opportunities in the future.

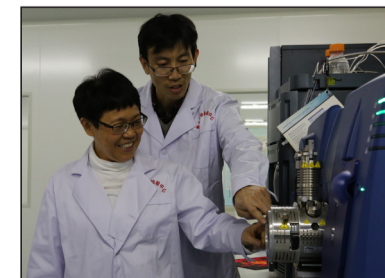
In terms of precision medicine, China's market share is less than one tenth of the US, Wong said, adding that China has a bigger population than the US and she believes there is significant room for development.

Wong said that after the high-speed railways connecting Guiyang to some other cities in western China officially open, it will only take two to three hours to travel from Guiyang to cities such as Chongqing and Chengdu, which will make it far easier to transport samples.

She said the Guiyang government has supported efforts to attract professionals. The authorities offered Wong's center a 4,000-square-meter office area, with free rent in the first three years and half rent in the fourth and fifth years.

Wong's key team members are all doctors who have more than 10 years' work experience in large pharmaceutical companies. Wong said her company also boasts advanced devices, so through examination, it can inform testers of the risk of cancer and other diseases, and assist in early prevention.

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Angela Wong tests samples with her colleague in her medical examination center in Guiyang, Guizhou province. YANG JUN / CHINA DAILY

E-commerce fights against poverty

Yanhe gov't focuses on technology to drive county-wide development, Yang Jun and Hao Nan report.

The Yanhe government expects to remove the county in Guizhou province from the list of national-level poverty-stricken areas by developing its e-commerce industry environment.

According to historical records, Yanhe served as an important commercial center during the Tang Dynasty (618-907), thronging with merchants in the middle and lower reaches of Wujiang River, the longest tributary on the southern bank of Yangtze River's upper reach.

However, the tide changed with the rise of land transportation and a newly established hydraulic power station that cut-off the Wujiang waterway. The county lost its advantage in water transportation and gradually fell behind in terms of economic development.

Many of its characteristic farm products, such as plums, goat meat, peanuts and tea, are hardly known to the outside world, partly because of the lack of channels by which to export them.

But, the region is now experiencing a turnaround.

Ran Azhou, a local pioneer engaged in e-commerce, said the emerging e-commerce industry has changed local people's traditional marketing models and has brought Yanhe's rural areas into closer contact with the world outside.

Ran demonstrated his commerce talents when he studied at Guizhou Normal University. He opened a snack shop in his dormitory building and bought his first car in his senior year.

When he was about to graduate in 2014, Ran heard that the Yanhe county government had decided to promote characteristically local products. He said he knew that a great opportunity was coming.

Ran returned to Yanhe after graduating and founded an e-commerce company in November 2014 to sell local specialties.

"Our best-selling products include honey, pomeloes and dried beef. The



Villagers celebrate the local plum festival in Nanzhuang village, Yanhe, Guizhou province. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



Ran Azhou (right), a pioneer engaged in e-commerce in Yanhe, helps to sell local farmers' agricultural products through his e-commerce company.

company's sales volume reached 1.2 million yuan (\$174,575) in the first year," he said.

In 2015, Yanhe had a good harvest of pomeloes, with a total output of more than 50,000 kilograms. In only two weeks, Ran's company sold all of the pomeloes, helping local farmers to double their incomes.

"Although there are many challenges in developing electronic businesses in Yanhe, I felt a great sense of accomplishment when I saw local farmers' agricultural products sell out through my company. These products used to be unsellable due to the lack of market channels and information," the 25-year-old said.

By the end of 2016, Yanhe had more than 30 e-commerce companies providing online retail services. Last year, the industry's total trade volume in the county exceeded 300 million yuan. Of this, more than 2.9 million yuan was created on Singles Day, an online shopping day on Nov 11 launched by Tmall — Alibaba Group's business-to-consumer platform.

"The internet and e-commerce environment help to make returning home an attractive idea," said Wu Zhaohui, deputy director of the e-commerce development office in Guizhou's Tongren city.

Related sectors, such as logistics,

129.18
billion yuan
Guizhou's e-commerce trade volume from January to November 2016

packaging and marketing planning, could also create many job opportunities, Wu said.

In 2015, nearly 810,000 young people came back to Guizhou to find jobs and start their own businesses, a year-on-year increase of 30.86 percent.

The Guizhou provincial government has launched a spring campaign to intensify the poverty-alleviation effort.

Guizhou provincial Party chief Chen Min'er said the province would continue to deepen the implementation of President Xi Jinping's guiding strategy with regard to efficient poverty alleviation, in a bid to make further steady headway in promoting the province's anti-poverty projects.

E-commerce, one of the aspects of the anti-poverty projects, is visibly taking off across the province.

Last year's official statistics show that e-commerce trade volume in Guizhou reached 129.18 billion yuan from January to November, a year-

on-year increase of 31.14 percent. Online retail transactions contributed 56.83 billion yuan, a 33.56 percent year-on-year increase.

Currently, the province has more than 50,000 e-commerce companies and online stores, 60 county-level e-commerce service centers and 6,950 service stations in rural areas. It also signed strategic cooperation agreements with several e-business giants, including Alibaba, online retailer JD and Suning Commerce Group.

"The number of Guizhou's e-commerce service stations will reach 10,000 at the end of this year, and the province's online retail turnover is supposed to exceed 80 billion yuan at the same time. The industry's trade volume is expected to exceed 200 billion yuan in 2017 and 360 billion yuan in 2020, the last year for the 13th Five-Year Plan (2016-20)," said Shen Xinguo, deputy head of the province's Commerce Department.

However, the future development of Guizhou's electronic business will not be plain sailing.

"The biggest problem is the lack of talented people in the industry. Transportation infrastructure in rural areas also needs improvement to lower logistics costs," Shen said.

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Anshun fortified village drives regional tourism efforts

By LI FUSHENG and YANG JUN

If one wants to learn about how Han Chinese people lived 600 years ago, one of the best places for field trips is a village in Southwest China's Guizhou province.

Located in Pingba county, in Southwest China's Guizhou province, the origins of Anshun's Tianlong Tunpu village can be traced back to the early Ming Dynasty (1368-1644). The inhabitants of the village are descendants of ethnic Han soldiers who manned a garrison in the area.

Even today locals speak a dialect that is closely related to that of Nanjing, Jiangsu province, a former Ming Dynasty capital.

The village is home to Di opera, or ground opera. It is performed with wooden masks, which are believed to show respect to gods and help dispel evil. Officials recognized the opera as a cultural heritage item in 2006.

"Masks are essential to the ground opera and it is the core of Tunpu culture," said Qin Fazhong, a native of Anshun.

The most distinctive feature of the ground opera is that different roles require different masks, to reveal the characters through their chang-

ing facial features and decorations.

A big fan of the opera, Qin raised 5 million yuan (\$729,100) and built Anshun's first museum dedicated to the opera masks in 2016. Each month, it attracts more than 1,000 visitors from around the world.

"The museum serves as a place for people to learn about the opera, which helps them to deepen their understanding of Tunpu culture," he said.

One thing that Qin did not expect, but is glad to see, is that his move has generated opportunities for his neighbors. Four of them are running hostels to accommodate visitors.

Qin said he hopes more people will become involved, to offer better accommodation and thus improve the local tourism industry.

Rejuvenated tourism industry

His wish is precisely what the local tourism authorities are working to achieve through a plan based on three well-known local places of interest.

One is Tunpu and the other two are Huangguoshu Waterfall, the province's top sightseeing destination, and Loong Palace, which features karst caves, underground waterfalls and serene rural scenery.



Qin Fazhong works on a mask sculpture. YANG JUN / CHINA DAILY

In August 2016, local authorities integrated the three sites into a larger tourist destination called the Huangguoshu Scenic Zone, because of the waterfall's fame, management experience, well-developed facilities and professional services.

The move creates a scenic area that offers a package of destinations, which will attract more tourists and extend their visits, said local tourism officials.

Zeng Kun, a deputy director of

the Huangguoshu scenic zone, said the newly integrated destination received 12.34 million visitors from home and abroad in 2016, representing 47 percent growth year-on-year.

The tourists generated revenues of 12.15 billion yuan in the year, up 51.55 percent from 2015.

The authorities plan to plant 733 hectares of Huangguo, a local fruit, this year, double the current number. In fact, Huangguoshu Waterfall is named after the fruit tree.

Zeng said, "The move will help farmers to increase their revenue and offer visitors another enjoyable sight."

As the integration deepens, local authorities are scaling up their investment in the destination's facilities.

Zhu Guiyun, a deputy Party secretary of Anshun, said the expenditure on Huangguoshu and Loong Palace totaled 1.13 billion yuan in 2016.

The authorities are also building a 350 million yuan wetland garden within the 115-square-kilometer Huangguoshu zone. When completed, it will connect four parts of the zone and offer visitors yet more scenic escapes.

The first phase of the project has been completed, with the garden receiving a national-level rating in January.

"Focusing on building an integrated scenic zone, Anshun is becoming a pioneer in the province's tourism development pattern. We will work hard to make the city an exemplar of integrated tourism zones in the country," said Zhu.

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